

Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project

DDMHS, Weeks Building, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671-1601 (802-241-2638)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani and Monica Simon

DATE: April 4, 2003

RE: Arrests After Children's Services in Rural Vermont

Over the next few months, we will be distributing a series of PIPs that examine a variety of "outcomes" for former recipients of AHS children's services. These outcomes will include measures of trouble with the law, continuing education, employment, economic dependency, participation in adult mental health treatment programs, and others. This line of inquiry is in response to a request for information from Suzanne Santarcangelo in her capacity as Director of the AHS Juvenile Justice Commission.

This week's PIP examines arrests rates for young men and women, 18-20 years of age, who had participated in community mental health (CMH) children's services programs and/or been on the caseload of Vermont's Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) child protection and juvenile justice agency when they were 17 years of age. Arrest rates were measured for three offense categories: violent crimes, property crimes, and possession of alcohol or marijuana. These arrest rates were measured for young people who were 17 years of age in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999. The arrest rates for these four cohorts were averaged to provide a measure of criminal justice involvement that is less sensitive to random year-to-year variation.

Extracts from three administrative databases were used in this analysis. Extracts from the DDMHS community mental health database and the SRS caseload database provided basic demographic information for the caseload of these two agencies. Extracts from the Department of Public Safety's Incident Based Reporting System (VIBRS) provided basic demographic information for every arrest in rural Vermont during the study period. Because these data sets do not share unique person identifiers, Probabilistic Population Estimation was used to determine the number of people shared by the treatment data sets and the arrest data set.

This analysis focuses exclusively on rural Vermont (outside of Chittenden County). We excluded Chittenden County from this study because data were only available for two years of the four years being examined. The Burlington Police Department did not submit detailed arrest data to the Department of Public Safety prior to January of 1998. Unfortunately, the Burlington Police Department stopped reporting the detailed arrest data (including date of birth) that is needed for this analysis to the Department of Public Safety on December 1, 2002, the South Burlington Police Department plans to stop reporting detailed information at the end of the current fiscal year, and Winooski and UVM may follow. The PIP intends to request database

extracts that do not include unique person identifiers, but do include data of birth and gender, from these police departments. The loss of these data for a significant portion of Chittenden County could substantially reduce our ability to assess the effectiveness of AHS programs in that region of the state.

The attached graphs and table provide arrest rates for three groups of 18 to 20 year olds: those who had received CMHC mental health services when they were 17 years of age, those who had been on the SRS caseload when they were 17 years of age, and the general population in the same age group.

Young men and women in the general population and in both of our service groups were more likely to be arrested for possession of alcohol or marijuana possession than for either of the other arrest category examined here. In the general population, 14% of young men and 9% of young women were arrested for possession of alcohol or marijuana, as were 18% of the male and 13% of the female mental health service recipients and 23% of males and 22% of the females who had been on the SRS caseload.

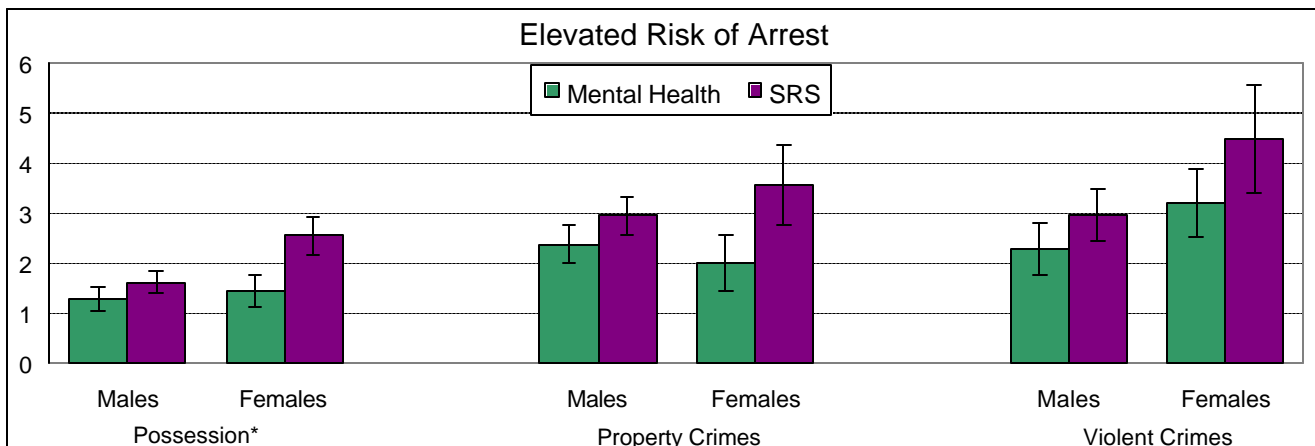
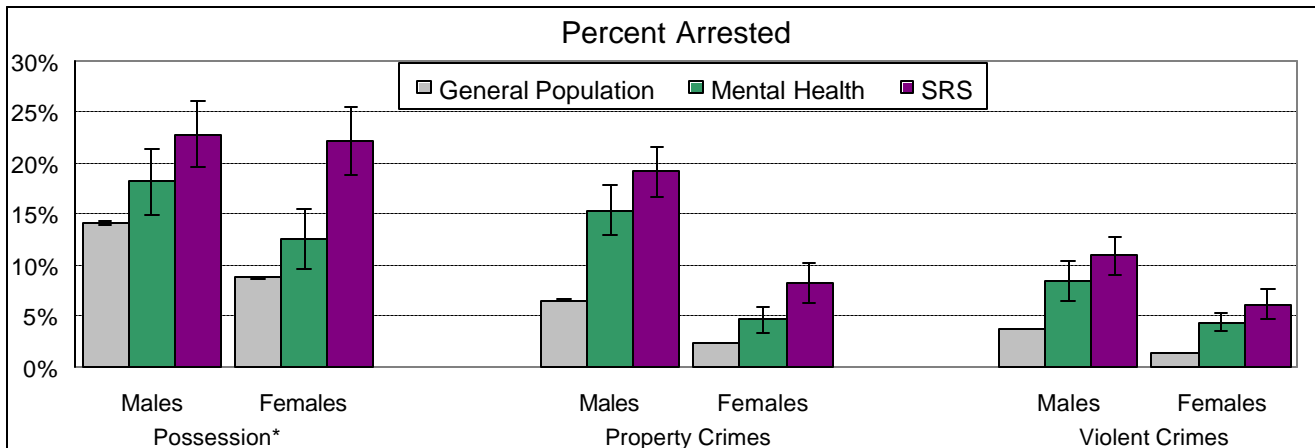
Young men and women in the general population and in our service groups were less likely to be arrested for property crimes. In the general population, 6% of males and 2% of females were arrested for property crimes, as were 15% of the male and 5% of the female mental health service recipients and 19% of males and 8% of the females who had been on the SRS caseload.

Young men in the general population and in both of our service groups were least likely to be arrested for violent crimes. In the general population, less than 4% of young men and only 1% of young women were arrested for violent offences, as were 8% of the male and 4% of the female mental health service recipients and 11% of males and 6% of the females who had been on the SRS caseload.

When we consider the arrest rates for service recipients in comparison to the arrest rates for the general population, we find a greater elevated risk of arrest for more serious crimes than for less serious crimes, elevated risk is always greater for former SRS clients than for former mental health clients, and elevated risk is frequently higher for female service recipients than for male services recipients. Service recipients' elevated risk of arrest for the offenses under examination varied substantially. The lowest was elevated risk of arrest for possession of alcohol or marijuana for male mental health service recipients (1.3 times as likely as young men in the general population). The highest was elevated risk of arrest for a violent crime for female SRS clients (4.5 times as likely as young women in the general population).

We will appreciate your comments on these findings and suggestions for further analysis to pip@ddmhs.state.vt.us or 802-241-2638.

**Young Men and Women in Trouble with the Law
within Three Years After Mental Health and SRS Services
Seventeen Year Olds Served in Rural Vermont Counties: FY1996 - FY1999**



		Total Number	Possession*	Property Crimes	Violent Crimes
			Percent Arrested		
Males	General Population	3,439	14% ± 0.2%	6% ± 0.1%	4% ± 0.1%
	Mental Health	173 ± 1	18% ± 3.3%	15% ± 2.4%	8% ± 1.9%
	SRS	182 ± 2	23% ± 3.2%	19% ± 2.4%	11% ± 1.9%
Females	General Population	3,293	9% ± 0.1%	2% ± 0.0%	1% ± 0.02%
	Mental Health	179 ± 1	13% ± 2.9%	5% ± 1.3%	4% ± 0.9%
	SRS	98 ± 0.5	22% ± 3.3%	8% ± 1.9%	6% ± 1.5%
			Elevated Risk		
Males	Mental Health		1.3 ± 0.2	2.4 ± 0.4	2.3 ± 0.5
	SRS		1.6 ± 0.2	3.0 ± 0.4	3.0 ± 0.5
Females	Mental Health		1.4 ± 0.3	2.0 ± 0.6	3.2 ± 0.7
	SRS		2.5 ± 0.4	3.6 ± 0.8	4.5 ± 1.1

*Possession arrests include illegal possession of alcohol by a minor and possession of marijuana.

Analysis is based on data provided by Vermont community mental health centers, Social Rehabilitation Services, and the Vermont Department of Public Safety. Rural Vermont counties include all except Chittenden county. Percents represent a 4 year (1996 - 1999) average. Because these data sets do not share unique person identifiers, Probabilistic Population Estimation was used to determine unduplicated counts of individuals arrested after treatment (with 95% confidence intervals).